

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In response to the Office Action mailed January 25, applicants submitted an After Final Amendment which was, apparently, not entered. Accordingly, in this response, applicants are adding new claim 11 which is simply claim 3 in independent form with all the limitations set forth in claims 1 and 2. Applicants have also amended claims 1 and 10 to indicate that the large sheet with the seam tape down the center is cut continuously completely through to form two separate sheets with seam tape along an edge of each sheet. This is intended to distinguish over the Farrow reference which does not disclose cutting completely through the seam tape and membrane to form two separate sheets.

The Farrow reference disclosed applying pressure sensitive adhesive in a cover sheet to a paper substrate to produce signage for use in a grocery store and the like. Applicants have previously maintained that the paper substrate disclosed in the Farrow reference is not a sheet membrane adapted for use as a roofing membrane. As previously indicated, processing relatively thick, heavy sheeting of EPDM rubber, or the like, which is typical roofing material, is significantly different from processing a paper web. Although in the abstract it would seem that the two are the same, practical considerations for handling EPDM membrane, or roofing membrane, makes this totally different. Even cutting through roofing membrane relative to cutting through paper presents different issues. Also, seam tape is certainly not the same as a pressure sensitive adhesive that might be applied to paper stock. All of these are significant differences.

As such, one skilled in the arts would not look to the Farrow reference to suggest anything with respect to applicants' invention. It is so unrelated that there would be no suggestion to modify the respective references, nor would there be any expectation of success (a requirement in a Section 103 rejection).

Also, as indicated, the Farrow reference simply discloses perforating the sheet. It does not disclose cutting through the sheet. This is a very significant difference. Applicants have to cut through the sheet. Only perforating would be totally unacceptable. One could not easily tear through a perforated roofing membrane with an applied seam tape. Modifying Farrow to cut completely through the material would not be obvious. It would totally defeat the disclosed purpose of the Farrow reference which is to form a sheet of material that can be run through a printer. If one cut completely through the perforated area, it would not be of a size that would be suitable for running through typical printers.

Finally, applicants would reiterate that the limitation of claim 1, that the claimed method is acting on a sheet of membrane adapted for use as roofing membrane, must be considered as part of claim 1. Obviously, all of the words of a claim must be taken into consideration. This is not merely a statement of the intended purpose of the product. One skilled in the art knows what roofing membrane is, and knows that paper stock is not roofing membrane. The two are totally unrelated. As such, once this limitation is taken into consideration, none of the cited references, neither the primary nor the secondary references, disclose or suggest applicants' invention, as none of these are related to membrane roofing.

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In light of the above, applicants would request reconsideration of the outstanding rejection of the claims, and allowance of same.

Respectfully submitted,

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